

Oswald was a patsy for an assassination conspiracy. But for a volunteer investigator, without subpoena power, answers can be hard to come by. Once in court, in this lawsuit, all that changed. Lane could get sworn answers to searching questions.

The courtroom door was opened to Lane by the unlikeliest of people: ex-CIA operative (and convicted Watergate burglar) E. Howard Hunt, who sued a newspaper publisher for defamation after the paper published an article asserting Hunt might have been implicated in the assassination.

At the 1985 trial, Hunt told the jury he was most injured by the doubts the article raised about him in the minds of his family. He won a judgment of \$650,000.

Enter Lane. In a second trial, after an appeal, Lane defended the Liberty Lobby, publisher of the newspaper "Spotlight." His defense strategy turned upon convincing the jury of the truth of a central assertion of the article—that Hunt was in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

After a parade of scene-setting depositions with tight-lipped CIA brass—including former Directors Richard Helms and Stansfield Turner, and former Western Hemisphere head David Atlee Phillips—Lane zeroed in on Hunt, setting a snare worthy of Perry Mason, which, according to Lane, demolished Hunt in the eyes of the jury. Suffice it to say, this passage of the transcript provides one of the most memorable variations ever on a great question of our time: Where were you when President Kennedy was shot?

Another bombshell was delivered by mystery woman Marita Lorenz, onetime love of Cuba's Fidel Castro. In depositions under oath that were read to the jury, Lorenz testified that shortly before the assassination, working as a CIA operative, she drove to Dallas from Miami with a CIA assassination squad, and that Hunt met the group in Dallas on the evening of Nov. 21, 1963, with an envelope of money.

After the meeting with Hunt, according to Lorenz, a man she later recognized as Lee Harvey Oswald's killer, Jack Ruby, came to the motel. Then Lorenz was allowed to fly back to Miami. Later, according to Lorenz, one of the conspirators chided her for leaving Dallas, saying: "We killed the president that day. You could have been a part of it—you know, part of history."

Do we believe this story? That, of course, is the million-dollar question. After listening to all the testimony, the jury acquitted the publisher, a clear victory for Lane. But this was a trial for defamation, not assassination. Hunt was the plaintiff, not the defendant. The verdict leaves Lorenz's story wide open to debate.

Lane says the jury believed Lorenz, and the book's dust jacket quotes its foreman saying that "when we examined the evidence, we were compelled to conclude that the CIA had indeed killed President Kennedy."

A reader may be convinced too.

## A persuasive case against the CIA

### Plausible Denial:

Was the CIA Involved in the Assassination of JFK?

By Mark Lane

Thunder's Mouth Press, 393 pages, \$22.95

Reviewed by Margaret Roberts

A Washington-based writer and TV producer

**M**ark Lane says this is his last book on the Kennedy assassination. After almost 30 years on the case, maybe he wants to go out a winner. "Plausible Denial" chronicles Lane's courtroom victory in a little-known defamation case he thinks solved the crime of the century, proving that the CIA killed President John Kennedy.

As a dean among conspiracy theorists, Lane has long believed that Lee Harvey

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